

**Architects in U.S. Move To Save Sho-Hondo**  
**By DAVE McNEILL, Managing Editor**  
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**Some prominent architects in the United States are working to raise international awareness about Nikken's scheme to tear down the Grand Main Temple.**

SGI members aren't the only ones protesting Nikken's planned demolition of the Grand Main Temple (Sho-Hondo). Not only have the Japanese architects and builders involved in the construction sent their objections to the temple — now saving the Grand Main Temple has gone global.

Last week, a group of prominent U.S. architects and preservationists announced the formation of the International Committee to Save the Sho-Hondo, based in New York. Still in the early stages of formation, the committee is urging the Main Temple's preservation from an aesthetic and architectural perspective. Their goal is to raise awareness of this issue in the international media and help galvanize the Japanese architectural community to protest the demolition that's to take place in their own backyard.

"The Sho-Hondo is locally significant because it has continually and successfully served its worshippers. It is nationally significant as one of the finest representatives of post-war architecture in Japan. And it's internationally irreplaceable as part of the archive of regional modernism," says David Anthone, the committee's chairman. "The proposed demolition seems incredulous to us all. Such an act would be recorded as one of the great architectural losses of the 20th century."

Mr. Anthone, who learned of the Main Temple's plight from concerned SGI-USA members, has written to many prominent architects in Japan, urging them to join his coalition. In this letter, he quotes several American architects deeply concerned with Nikken's demolition plans (please see "Voices," p. 4).

The Main Temple was completed in 1972 and was designed to last hundreds of years. The temple's unique roof is just one of the many features praised by architects around the world. Symbolizing the wings of a crane about to take flight, the roof employs a semi-rigid suspension system with no support posts, allowing an audience of 6,000 people to each have an unobstructed view of the altar. This semi-rigid system employs steel beams and concrete plates as the suspension system instead of steel cables, giving the roof a rigidity needed to withstand the forces of wind and earthquakes over the centuries.

The designers consideration for the comfort and safety of the people who came to worship is evident throughout the temple, from the heating and air-conditioning to the separate entrance areas for good and bad weather. For these and other reasons, architects like those on the committee say that the Main Temple is a modern masterpiece.

Tearing it down would be, as one of the architects in the committee wrote, "nothing short of a crime."

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